

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00
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SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-12
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4230
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
USMISSION SINAI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 9025

LONDON ALSO PASS AMBASSADOR LEWIS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, IS
SUBJECT: ISRAELI PRESS SPECULATION ON WEIZMAN-SADAT TALKS

1. SUMMARY: ISRAELI PRESS SPECULATES ON WHAT SADAT TOLD WEIZMAN DURING THEIR SALZBURG MEETING, AND ON WHAT SORT OF PROPOSALS THE DEFENSE MINISTER BROUGHT BACK WITH HIM. PRESS ALSO REPORTS ON JULY 16 GOI CABINET MEETING DURING WHICH SADAT, PERES, AND WEIZMAN CAME UNDER HEAVY ATTACK, AND IN WHICH DISCUSSION OF SADAT'S PROPOSALS WAS PUT OFF FOR ONE WEEK. OTHER ISRAELI REACTIONS ARE REPORTEDLY UNCLASSIFIED

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MIXED WHILE EDITORIAL COMMENT IS LARGELY NEGATIVE OF YESTERDAY'S CABINET DECISION TO POSTPONE DISCUSSION. END SUMMARY.

2. THE ISRAELI PRESS TODAY (JULY 17) IS ALIVE WITH SPECULATION OVER WHAT EXACTLY WAS DISCUSSED DURING WEIZMAN'S RECENT MEETING WITH SADAT, AND OVER WHAT

SPECIFIC PROPOSALS THE DEFENSE MINISTER BROUGHT BACK TO JERUSALEM. THE JERUSALEM POST (GOODMAN) GIVES THE MOST DETAILED PRESENTATION OF PROPOSALS SUPPOSEDLY PRESENTED BY SADAT TO WEIZMAN, INCLUDING IN ITS REPORT THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

- A) THAT THE WEST BANK WILL BE RETURNED TO JORDAN AFTER A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD;
- B) THAT DURING THAT INTERIM FIVE YEARS, ISRAEL, JORDAN AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE WEST BANK WILL RUN A TRANSITIONAL COMMITTEE WITH ITS OWN POLICE FORCE;
- C) THAT ISRAEL WILL BE ABLE TO RETAIN ITS SETTLEMENTS ON THE WEST BANK (IT IS PRESUMED THAT HE MEANS UNDER JORDANIAN SOVEREIGNTY.);
- D) THAT ISRAEL WILL BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN A MILITARY PRESENCE ON THE WEST BANK AS DEFINED BY ISRAEL'S SECURITY NEEDS;
- E) THAT THE AGREEMENT ENVISIONS PART OF THE AREA WITHDRAWN FROM BEING DEMILITARIZED;
- F) THAT IT IS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE THAT MINOR BORDER MODIFICATIONS TO THE PRE-1967 LINE ARE ACCEPTABLE;
- G) THAT THE SAME ARRANGEMENTS AS SPELLED OUT FOR THE WEST BANK WOULD APPLY TO THE GAZA STRIP, WITH EGYPT CONSTITUTING THE THIRD PARTY IN THE TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE; AND
- H) THAT THE PROBLEM OF THE AIRFIELDS IN THE SINAI COULD BE SOLVED. AT LEAST ONE OF THESE AIRFIELDS COULD

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BE DECLARED A CIVILIAN AIRBASE. THE POST ADDS THAT SADAT WAS REPORTEDLY NOT SPECIFIC ABOUT THE SETTLEMENTS IN THE RAFAH REGION. WEIZMAN, ACCORDING TO GOODMAN, PROPOSED THAT THESE SETTLEMENTS "HAVE A 'SPECIAL STATUS' CONSTITUTING AN ANNEX TO THE GAZA STRIP."

3. HAARETZ (SCHIFF), ALONG WITH GOODMAN, REPORTS THAT SADAT ALSO TOLD WEIZMAN THAT A "TERRITORIAL GESTURE" WOULD BE APPRECIATED BY THE EGYPTIAN LEADER PRIOR TO ANY SPECIFIC PEACE NEGOTIATIONS, "AS A GESTURE OF GOODWILL IN RESPONSE TO THE ORIGINAL OVERTURE SADAT MADE IN COMING TO JERUSALEM." SCHIFF HOLDS THAT SADAT SUGGESTED THIS GESTURE TAKE THE FORM OF AN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM EL ARISH TO THE EL ARISH/RAS MUHAMMAD LINE IN THE SINAI, AND THAT THE CAPITAL OF THE SINAI IMMEDIATELY BE HANDED OVER TO EGYPT. ACCORDING TO SCHIFF, SADAT COMPLAINED THAT ISRAEL HAD THUS FAR MADE NO APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO HIS PEACE INITIATIVE, ISRAEL'S PROMISES BEING CONFINED TO MERE WORDS, WITHOUT THE ACCOMPANYING ACTS NECESSARY TO KEEP THE PEACE INITIATIVE ALIVE. SADAT SUPPOSEDLY ADDED THAT, SHOULD SUCH A TRANSFER TAKE PLACE,

EGYPT, FOR ITS PART, WOULD AGREE THAT RULE OVER EL ARISH WOULD BE EFFECTED BY CIVILIAN FACTORS WITH NO EGYPTIAN MILITARY FORCES BEING PERMITTED TO ENTER THE TOWN.

4. IN A SEPARATE ARTICLE, HAARETZ (TIRA) HOLDS THERE IS NO TRUTH TO REPORTS THAT WEIZMAN RETURNED WITH AN EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL FOR A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES OR WITH AN EGYPTIAN CONSENT TO ISRAELI MILITARY PRESENCE ON THE WEST BANK. CITING "THE MOST AUTHORIZED SOURCES", TIRA CLAIMS THAT THE PROPOSALS BROUGHT BACK BY WEIZMAN CONCERN NOT MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE, BUT RATHER THE CONTINUED CONDUCT OF NEGOTIATIONS AFTER THE LONDON CONFERENCE.
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5. WIDESPREAD PRESS REPORTS CONFIRM THAT THE GOI CABINET, AT ITS WEEKLY SESSION JULY 16, PUT OFF FOR ONE WEEK DETAILED DISCUSSION OF WEIZMAN'S REPORT ON HIS MEETING WITH SADAT. THE CABINET MEETING IS REPORTED IN SEVERAL PAPERS AS HAVING BEEN CONDUCTED IN AN ANTI-WEIZMAN ATMOSPHERE. YEDIOT (ZIMUKI, REICHER, AND HABER) SAY THE MEETING ONCE AGAIN CAST A CLOUD OVER RELATIONS BETWEEN BEGIN AND WEIZMAN, ALTHOUGH BEGIN REFRAINED FROM CRITICIZING THE DEFENSE MINISTER, AND EVEN INTERVENED TO STOP ATTACKS ON HIM. THE DECISION TO POSTPONE DISCUSSION OVER SADAT'S PROPOSALS IS IN ITSELF SEEN AS A DEFEAT FOR WEIZMAN WHO, ACCORDING TO YEDIOT, FELT THEY WERE SUBJECTS REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION. THE CABINET INSTEAD ADDRESSED ITSELF AT LENGTH TO THE MANNER IN

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WHICH NEGOTIATIONS ARE CURRENTLY BEING CONDUCTED.
THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY THE CABINET AT THE END OF
ITS SESSION CLEARLY REFLECTS DISGRUNTLEMENT OVER SADAT'S
ATTEMPT TO MANIPULATE ISRAELI POLITICS THROUGH HIS RE-
CENT MEETINGS WITH WEIZMAN AND OPPOSITION LEADER PERES.
THE STATEMENT SAID, IN PART, "THE EXCLUSIVE AUTHORITY TO
NEGOTIATE WITH EGYPT OR WITH ANY OTHER COUNTRY WHICH IS
IN A STATE OF WAR WITH ISRAEL IS GIVEN TO THE GOVERNMENT
AND ITS AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES. THE LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION
IN THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS WILL BE RECIPROCAL. THE
HEADS OF STATE OR THEIR AUTHORIZED MINISTERS WILL HEAD
THEIR DELEGATIONS." YEDIOT AND THE POST (SAFADI) ASSERT
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THAT, ALTHOUGH SADAT AND THE OPPOSITION ARE THE TARGETS
OF THIS STATE MENT, IT CAN BE INTERPRETED AS CABINET
CRITICISM OF WEIZMAN AS WELL. DAVAR'S MILITARY CORRESPONDENT
SEES THIS CRITICISM AS PART OF A CAMPAIGN CURRENTLY
UNDERWAY TO BRING WEIZMAN'S RESIGNATION OR DISMISSAL.
WEIZMAN,S CRITICS, ACCORDING TO THIS REPORT, HOPE TO SEE
HIM REPLACED BY AGRICULTURE MINISTER SHARON. THESE CABINET
CRITICS ARE WIDELY REPORTED TO INCLUDE SHARON, HURVITZ,
AND MODAI. THE ARGUMENTS BETWEEN WEIZMAN AND HIS CRITICS
ARE SAID TO HAVE TAKEN UP MUCH OF THE FOUR-HOUR CABINET
SESSION, LEAVING LITTLE TIME FOR DEBATING THE EGYPTIAN
PROPOSALS. NOR DID THE CABINET ADDRESS ITSELF TO SUBJECTS
CONNECTED WITH THE LONDON CONFERENCE.

6. PRELIMINARY REACTIONS TO THE LATEST EGYPTIAN PRO-
POSALS AND THE WEIZMAN-SADAT MEETING ITSELF ARE MIXED.
PM BEGIN, ADDRESSING A HERUT FACTION MEETING SUNDAY

EVENING (JULY 16), DESCRIBED WEIZMAN'S TALKS AS "IMPORTANT". BEGIN ALSO TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO STRESS THE NEED TO "WAGE A STUBBORN CAMPAIGN, WITH GREAT FAITH" FOR ISRAEL'S PEACE PLAN. IN RESPONSE TO WORLD CRITICISM OF HIS HARDLINE STANDS, BEGIN CHARACTERIZED HIMSELF AS "NOT AN OBSTACLE TO PEACE" BUT RATHER "A BARRIER TO SURRENDER". THE POST (BRILLIANT AND ARENSTEIN) REPORTS THIS REMARK WAS GREETED WITH A STANDING OVATION AND RHYTHMIC CLAPPING FROM THE AUDIENCE. BEGIN ALSO SAID THAT ADOPTION AND FULFILLMENT OF ISRAEL'S PEACE PLAN WOULD INCREASE THE PROSPECT OF PEACE, SECURITY AND SETTling THE LAND OF ISRAEL. HE ADDED THAT THE GOI WANTS NORMALIZATION OF THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AS SET OUT IN THAT AFTERNOON'S CABINET COMMUNIQUE, AND SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE CABINET FOUND RECENT EGYPTIAN DECLARATIONS UNACCEPTABLE, THIS DID NOT MEAN THE GOI DOES UNCLASSIFIED

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NOT WANT PEACE. HE ADDED THAT SADAT WAS NOT THE MODERATE LEADER HE PORTRAYS HIMSELF TO BE IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS. MKS SHARON AND COHEN ALSO ADDRESSED THE SESSION AND CHARGED SADAT WITH ATTEMPTS TO SOW DISCORD AMONG ISRAEL'S LEADERSHIP. COHEN CALLED ON BEGIN TO CANCEL THE LONDON CONFERENCE, GIVEN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

7. ELSEWHERE, HAARETZ (TIRA) CLAIMS THAT SEVERAL POLITICAL SOURCES IN JERUSALEM FEEL THAT NO UNDUE OPTIMISM IS CALLED FOR REGARDING THE FACT THAT ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN NEGOTIATIONS ARE EMERGING FROM THEIR STATE OF DEADLOCK OR THAT THEY ARE GAINING NEW MOMENTUM. HOWEVER, OTHER SOURCES ARE REPORTED BY TIRA TO BE MORE OPTIMISTIC, BELIEVING THAT CONTACTS WITH EGYPT WILL CONTINUE AFTER THE LONDON TALKS. ON THE QUESTION OF RETURNING EL ARISH TO EGYPTIAN RULE, HAARETZ (SCHIFF) ASSERTS THAT "ISRAELI SOURCES" SAY SUCH AN OFFER MIGHT PERHAPS HAVE A CHANCE AT A LATER STAGE IN THE TALKS, BUT NOT NOW BEFORE THE TALKS HAVE EVEN BEGUN. ACCORDING TO A POST POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT, THE LABOR PARTY CHARACTERIZED THE GOI REACTION TO SADAT'S MEETINGS WITH BOTH PERES AND WEIZMAN AS "HYSTERICAL".

8. IN AN EDITORIAL TODAY, HAARETZ CALLED ON THE GOI TO TAKE A SERIOUS LOOK AT SADAT'S PROPOSALS, EVEN IF, IN THEIR PRESENT FORM, THEY DO NOT SEEM ACCEPTABLE. THE SUBJECT WHICH THE GOVERNMENT MUST ANSWER, ACCORDING TO HAARETZ, IS WHETHER SADAT'S IMAGE OF PEACE, AS REPORTED BY WEIZMAN, CAN BE THE SUBJECT OF NEGOTIATIONS. DAVAR JOINED IN, ARGUING THAT SADAT, IN HIS TALKS WITH WEIZMAN, HAS BEEN TRYING TO FOSTER A CHANNEL THROUGH WHICH ISRAEL AND EGYPT WOULD BE ABLE TO SEEK

RECIPROCAL COMPROMISES. THE WISDOM OF NEGOTIATION
JUSTIFIES A CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THAT ATTEMPT,
STATE DAVER. HOWEVER, YESTERDAY'S CABINET COMMUNIQUE
CONTRADICTS THIS LINE OF ARGUMENT, WHILE IT ALSO DIS-
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GRACES WEIZMAN, AND INCREASES FEARS THAT THE PEACE PRO-
CESS REVIVED IN SALZBURG WILL NOT BE FURTHERED IN
LONDON. AL HAMISHMAR IS ALSO CRITICAL OF THE CABINET
DECISION TO POSTPONE ITS DISCUSSIONS OF SADAT'S LATEST
PROPOSALS.
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